



**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**DLNR REMINDS OCEAN USERS TO SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR  
PROTECTING THE KOHOLA (WHALES) IN HAWAII'S WATERS**

HONOLULU -- The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is asking all recreational and commercial boaters to be extra cautious during whale season, especially during the height of the season, January through March, to help ensure the continued restoration of the thriving population of these treasured mammals.

From now through March, humpback whales are abundant in Hawai'i's waters. Beginning around November of each year, migrating humpback whales (or kohola) return to Hawaiian waters from their feeding grounds in Alaska in order to birth calves in the warm waters around our islands. As many as 10,000 whales may visit our waters in a single season.

"The protection we provide to the humpback whale today is a promise for future generations that they will be able to witness their majesty in the future," said DLNR's Jeff Walters, who is co-manager of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary.

To reduce the chances of collisions with whales, vessel operators are advised to post dedicated whale lookouts, always stay at the helm, and maintain a slow and safe vessel speed.

Humpback whales are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act since their inception in 1972 and 1973 respectively.

The whales also enjoy additional protection while they are in the waters of the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary, which includes areas adjacent to all of the main Hawaiian Islands (with the exception of Kaho'olawe). The sanctuary is co-managed as a federal-state partnership by the DLNR, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA), National Ocean Service, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

Federal rules also prohibit all ocean users from approaching within 100 yards of any humpback whale. This rule applies year round throughout the Hawaiian archipelago in all waters out to 200 miles offshore.

The DLNR has implemented additional safeguards to protect the whale population in its administrative rules. Numerous areas set aside for parasailing and recreational thrill operations are closed during whale season.

The following areas are closed to parasailing, thrill craft, and/or high speed boating December 15 through May 15 to protect the humpback whales by reducing possible collisions and other disturbances.

#### O'AHU

Hale'iwa Restricted Zone E - Recreational Thrill Craft Zone

Kane'ohe Commercial High Speed Boating Zone K

Maunalua Bay Waters Recreational Thrill Craft Zone E

[Closed January 6 – May 15 - Maunalua Bay Waters Parasail Zone G (except for portion G1)]

Koko Head and Makapu'u Commercial High Speed Boating Zone

#### MAUI

Lahaina-Ka'anapali Offshore Restricted Area Parasail Zone

Ka'anapali Commercial Thrill Craft Areas 1, 2, 3

Ka'anapali Commercial Water Sledding Zone per

Maui Humpback Whale Protected Waters closed to thrill craft, parasailing, water sledding, Commercial High Speed Boating zones

#### BIG ISLAND

Kailua Bay Restricted Zone B – Commercial Parasailing and Recreational Thrill Craft Zone

[Kailua Bay Restricted Zone C opens as an alternative site from December 15 – May 15; this area is closed May 15 – December 15]

To report marine mammals in trouble call the NOAA Marine Mammal Hotline: 1-888-256-9840.

To report disturbances or legal violations please call the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement Hotline at 1-800-853-1964 or the DLNR Division of Conservation and Resource Enforcement Hotline at (808) 643-DLNR (643-3567).

Hawai'i boaters and other ocean users can visit the following website for more information and guidelines on safe and lawful ocean use during humpback whales season:

[http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/explore/safe\\_boating.html](http://hawaiihumpbackwhale.noaa.gov/explore/safe_boating.html).

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